

LET'S EXPLORE

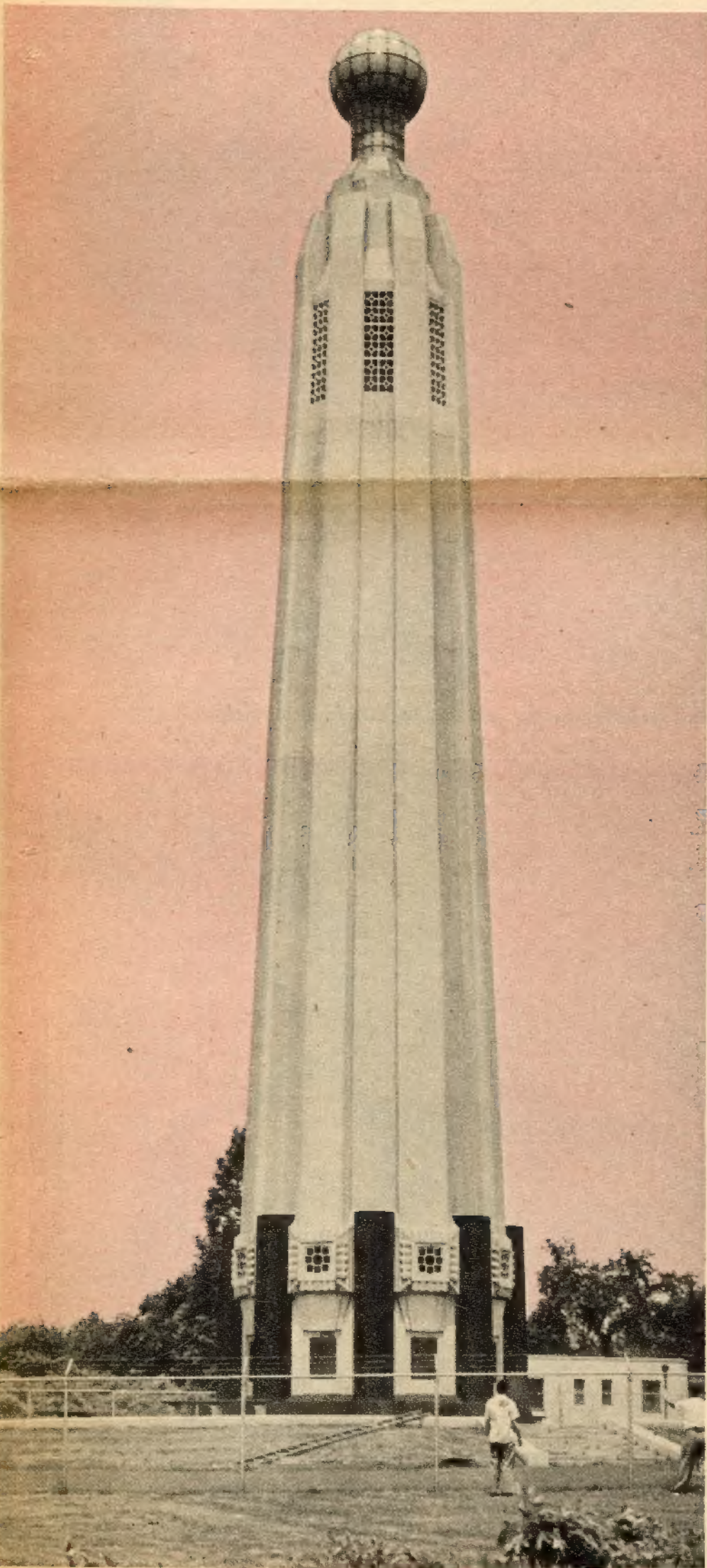
RURAL MIDDLESEX via 'Dream' Parkway



Parkway in a park—views (↑ ↓) along the completed 4.3-mile strip of Route 4, from Westfield to Iselin. Picnic areas will be among recreational features.



BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM



At Menlo Park this towering monument stands on site of laboratory where Thomas E. Edison made the first incandescent bulb.

THERE'S just enough of New Jersey's dream parkway finished to make the motorist sigh for the day when he can get along the full length of Route 4 and zip to the shore without traffic lights, crossroads or billboards. Today is a good time to get an eyeful of the completed strip without being subjected to the traffic that some day will be streaming to and from Cape May.

Today's trip has a double objective. After viewing the parkway it swings down through Middlesex County to the Raritan River then comes back by a different route. In addition to offering views of highly pleasant Middlesex rural areas the trip can suggest some back roads to and from future shore visits.

About 4.3 miles of the parkway from Central avenue in Westfield to Route 27 in Iselin are open. Central avenue leads southeast from Westfield Center to the parkway and after swinging upward and to the right on Route 4 the motorist is quickly impressed with this "parkway in a park."

GLARING billboards, tumble-down hot dog stands and blinking neon lights are refreshingly absent. Instead, broad patches of natural groves and grassy land spread away on either side of the concrete pavement. Separating the north and south bound lanes is a tree-studded strip. Commercialism will never come to this parkway because in gaining its right-of-way the State Highway Department acquired enough land on either side to keep the road-spoilers away. Even the gas stations will be well-screened behind clumps of trees.

Varied types of bridges carrying cross traffic over the parkway lend enchantment and rustic guardrails complete the picture. Grass grows right to the pavement but heavy fill underneath the turf on either side can support the weight of a car. The Highway Department won't be putting up "keep off the grass" signs, either. Frank Reddon, department public relations man, reports recreational use will be encouraged. He says one picnic area has been established at

"Overlook" on the present stretch of parkway and more are planned as the demand arises.

LEAVING the parkway, swing south on Route 27 beside the heavily-traveled tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad to Menlo Park, site of the monument built 13 years ago on the spot where Thomas Edison's original laboratory stood.

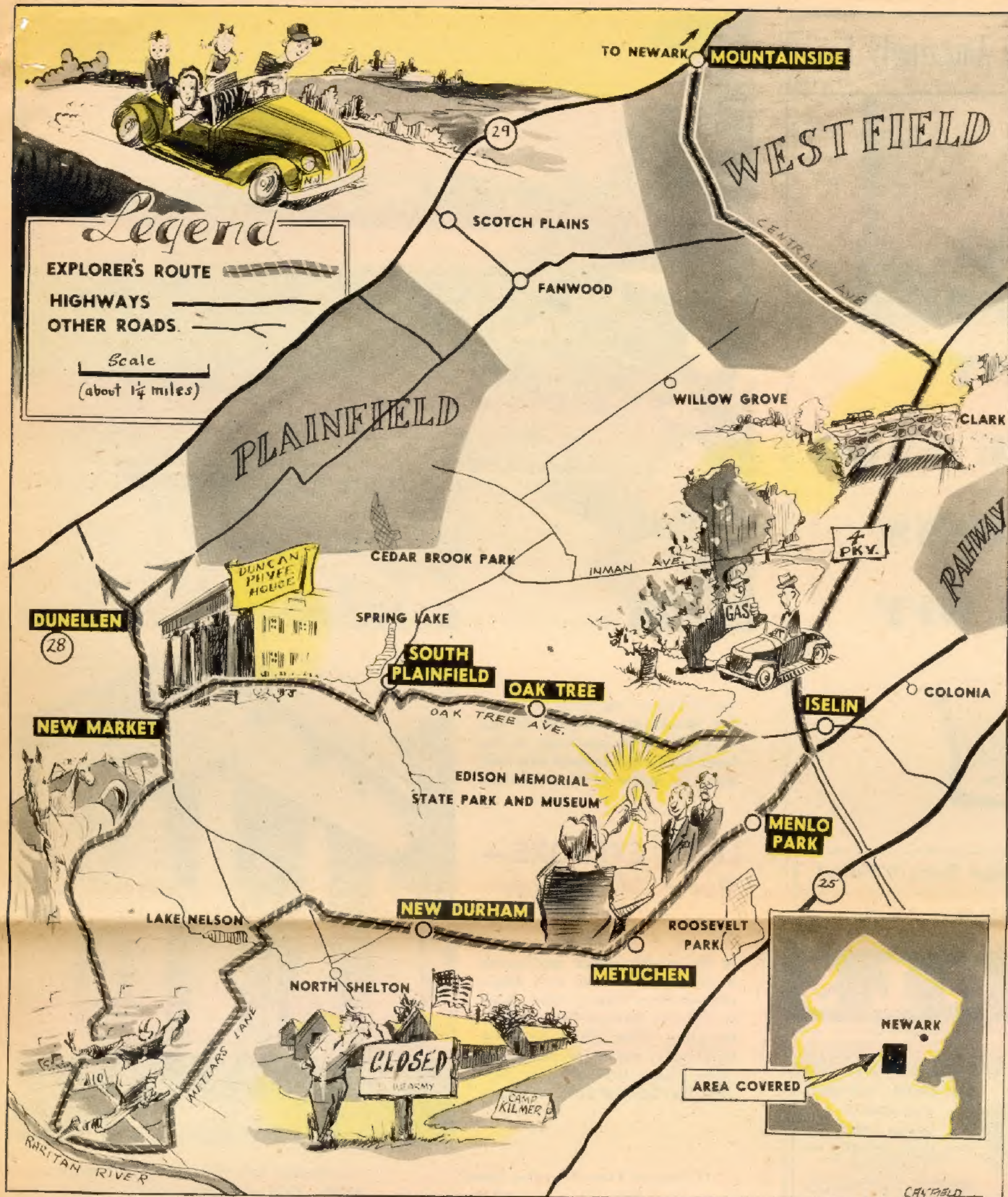
The 131-foot tower is topped by a 9,500-watt beacon made in the form of a huge replica of Edison's first incandescent bulb. A museum in the tower's base contains among other things a perpetually-lit scale model of the bulb. Bronze plaques around the base tell details of Edison's fantastic inventing career. The museum is open daily except Monday from 10 A. M.-5 P. M.

Edison's work at Menlo Park extended beyond his inventions. Almost completely forgotten now is the copper mine which he successfully operated in the hill below the village. An 1882 history tells how thin strips of copper as large as 12 feet square were taken from the diggings. Edison's workers found evidences that the mine had been operated well before 1800 before flooding stopped that early mining.

ROUTE 27 veers left in Metuchen but today's trip continues straight ahead under the railroad tracks to a right turn in Amboy avenue, about 300 feet past the tracks. Crowded highways are left behind as the land levels out and the route swings through excellent rural land. Agricultural folk have found this sandy loam soil highly attractive for more than 200 years.

Make a right turn at the "T" intersection beyond New Durham then take the next left to Lake Nelson and the Raritan. Light planes circling overhead signalize the nearness of Hadley Field, about a half-mile straight ahead on the concrete. Hadley was once an Eastern air mail terminus but now is generally used only by lighter craft.

All the way to the river the road follows Metlar's lane, swinging around the tip of tree-edged Lake Nelson. Soon the deserted



buildings of once-humming Camp Kilmer loom ahead as the road bears right at a "Y" intersection, then the route dips down through thickly-growing trees to Route S-28 at the Landing. Route S-28 provides a highly-enjoyable trip back to Bound Brook along the Raritan but on week-ends it is often crowded. A quieter return can be had via Hoe's lane to New Market.

Pause for a minute at the Landing, however, to recall that long ago a thriving settlement was built here as a shipping rival to New Brunswick. It grew rapidly and threatened for a while to overshadow the big Middlesex port—until boatmen found the Landing could be reached only under favorable tide conditions. By 1875 the last of the many buildings was razed and now thick brush growing by the Raritan River almost hides the Landing Bridge from view and covers all traces of former glory. The bridge, incidentally, can be used to bypass New Brunswick conveniently if the motorist is seeking quieter ways to the shore.

A BIG white house surrounded by a wire fence warns of Hoe's lane to the right off Route S-28, about a half-mile west of Rutgers Stadium. Off to the left near the river the masts of RCA's transoceanic wireless station stretch well over 400 feet into the air.

Hoe's lane traverses a region of well-

For this week's swing into Middlesex County the motorist is introduced to a recently opened stretch of Route 4. Leaving the parkway, one finds many points of interest such as Lake Nelson (below) beyond New Durham.



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Shore-bound motorists crossing the Washington Avenue Bridge in background lose most of the beauty located around this mill pond in center of New Market.

**LET'S EXPLORE—
Rural Middlesex**

In the neighborhood, and worth a visit, is the old Vail Mansion on New Market road. Built in 1814 by Duncan Phyfe for his daughter, Eliza Phyfe Vail, the building is noted for its almost pure classic revival lines. It is now Our Lady of Fatima chapel.



(Continued From Preceding Page)

kept farms. Soon the motorist becomes aware of the Watchung Mountains ahead or off to the left as the route goes through a crossroad to a left turn in Stelton road headed for New Market. The Watchungs guide the strangers in these parts—at their feet run Routes 28 and 29 back to Newark.

New Market was called "Quibbletown" by Revolutionary War soldiers because of the great amount of petty arguing which took place in the village. It is said that arguments first started in 1707 when a group in the local Baptist Church insisted that the Sabbath should be observed on the seventh day rather than the first. Eventually that argument led to the founding of a new Baptist church.

WORTH a visit in New Market is the old Vail Mansion in New Market road (reached

by turning left where Stelton road enters town, then swinging right around the pond). The three-story clapboard house fronted by four imposing Doric columns was built in 1814 by Duncan Phyfe for his daughter, Eliza Phyfe Vail. The building has been the chapel of Our Lady of Fatima Church for two years.

The motorist can get quickly home by following New Market road to Dunellen and intersections with Routes 28 and 29. A less-traveled road back heads north from New Market center across Washington avenue to Hamilton boulevard in South Plainfield. Turn left on Hamilton then right to Oak Tree road, which leads to a traffic light on Route 27. To the left lies car-jammed St. George avenue but to the right the parkway beckons again. The new stretch of road bears some traffic, of course, but compared to the horrors of Route 27 it is trivial.



Hadley Field, once an air mail terminus, now serves as private plane skyport.